

**Remarks at a Rally for
Representative Corrine
Brown in Jacksonville, Florida**

October 4, 2000

Thank you. Now, I would say that you're ready to win this election. Senator Holzenorf, thank you for getting us off to a good and rousing start. I want to thank Corrine's colleague, Representative Alcee Hastings, from Florida, my great friend and a great Representative. Thank you for being here.

And I'm here to say, based on personal experience, that Corrine Brown does deliver. I saw this beautiful elevated rail coming in here. I know how hard she's fought for transportation, for affordable housing, for Head Start and education, for a Patients' Bill of Rights. Not only that, I saw those billboards. I think you're the prettiest candidate in this race. You're pretty to me. *[Laughter]* When I was a little boy, my mother used to say, "Pretty is as pretty does." *[Laughter]*

Didn't the Vice President do a great job last night in that debate? I was so proud of him. Look, this is a rally, and we can cheer, and I know I'm up here preaching to the saved. But I want to ask you just for a few minutes to kind of listen and let me say a few things from the heart. I'm not running for anything this year, and most days I'm okay about it. My party has a new leader. My family has a new candidate. Thanks for the plug, Corrine. I wish you could vote in New York, but we need you here. But I want to tell you something.

This is a big race, not just for President but every Senate seat and every House seat counts. If anybody has learned that over the last 8 years, I have. Every one of them counts. If I've been able to do any good for you and for our country, it's only been because of people like Alcee Hastings and Corrine Brown, who stood with me and helped me to build this country and helped me to move it forward.

I want to thank the people of Florida. The first electoral victory I got, of any kind, when I ran for President, was in December of 1991 in the straw poll at the Florida Democratic Convention. I am grateful. We nearly won here in 1992, and we only spent a little bit

of money, and they spent millions. And so, in 1996 I said, "Look, we've been good for Florida. We had the Summit of the Americas. We moved the Southern Command to Florida. We saved the Everglades. We brought the economy back. We're going to win in Florida." And we did. And when we won Florida, everybody said, "The election is over. Bill Clinton and Al Gore have been re-elected. If they can win in Florida, they're going to win America."

I tell you that not to look back but to look forward. In America, our public life is always about tomorrow. I have worked as hard as I could to turn this country around. And what I want to say to you is, it is all on the line in this election. We made some big progress last night in clarifying for the American people the choices before them. But what I want to talk to you about for a few minutes today is a little more about those choices, because every one of you when you leave here, between now and election day, will come in contact with scores, maybe even hundreds, of other people, your friends that you work with, go to church with, go to social events with, take your kids to events with, who never have come to a political rally like this but who will vote on election day or who may decide not to vote on election day. And I want you to pledge to yourselves, for yourselves and your children and our future, that when you leave here, you're going to do your dead-level best to make sure every single American understands the nature of the choice and why they should vote—why they should vote for Corrine Brown, and why they should vote for Bill Nelson, and why they should vote for Al Gore and Joe Lieberman in this election.

First of all, there's that minor matter of the record. I don't want to comment on all the stuff we saw last night, but I got tickled in that debate when they were talking about the economy, and the Republican nominee said, "Well, you know, I think the economy has done a lot more for Clinton/Gore than Clinton/Gore has done for the economy; the American people brought America back." And Al Gore said, "The American people did bring America back, and they do deserve most of the credit, but they were working

pretty hard in 1992, also, and it didn't come out this way."

Now, look, there are big differences here. And the clearest ones, in a way, are on the economy. They want to go back to the way they did it before. And they think they can afford to do it because we cleaned up the mess that they left before.

Now, let me just remind you of something. Before I took office, the deficit was \$290 billion. It was supposed to be \$455 billion this year. The debt of America had quadrupled under the 12 years of the Republican administration. And don't let them tell you the Democratic Congress did it. The Congress actually appropriated less money than they asked for in the previous 12 years.

Now, what's happened since then? We turned the biggest deficit in history into the biggest surplus in history. And when I leave office, we will have paid down \$360 billion of the Nation's debt. What has that meant to you? What has that meant to you? Twenty-two million new jobs; the lowest unemployment in 30 years; the lowest minority unemployment ever recorded; the highest homeownership ever recorded; the most number of small businesses ever created, year after year after year; lower interest rates that save money on home mortgages, car payments, college loans, credit cards, the whole 9 yards. It has been good for America.

Now, what is Al Gore's plan? What is Corrine advocating? We want to give you a tax cut out of part of this surplus for retirement savings, to send your kids to college, for child care, for long-term care. We want to give extra tax cuts for low-income working people, especially if they've got a lot of kids. We want to do all that, but we're not promising as big a tax cut as they are. When you take account of all the calculations, ours is barely more than a third of what they promise. Why? Because we think we need to save money for education, for health care, for the environment, and we want to keep paying down the debt.

Now, here's something that didn't get pointed out that I hope will come out later. Every economist that has studied this—just about every one will say interest rates will be a percent lower for another 10 years if we stay with the Democratic plan as com-

pared with the Republican plan. Why? Because they can't pay off the debt. They've got this huge tax cut. Their plan to partially privatize Social Security will cost another trillion dollars. And that's before they make all their other spending promises and keep them, which means you're right back in the soup again. And they just hope we've got enough cushion built up that nobody will notice.

But interest rates will be a point lower if you stick with them. Do you know what that's worth to you in 10 years? Another \$400 billion-plus in effective tax cuts; \$290 billion in lower home mortgages—\$390 billion—\$30 billion in lower car payments; \$15 billion in lower college loan payments. I think that's the kind of tax cut America needs. And it will be good for you, and we'll get this country out of debt.

You heard the Vice President say last night that they want to give tax cuts to people making over a million dollars, that are more than they proposed to spend extra in education and health care. What we want to do is give wealthy people a tax cut if they'll invest in the areas of America that aren't part of our prosperity today, so that we can all go forward together.

Now, these are big differences, folks. And it's not like you hadn't had a test run. We tried it their way for 12 years and our way for 8 years. If you liked it their way, you should vote for them. If you liked it our way, you better vote for Al Gore, Joe Lieberman, Bill Nelson, and Corrine Brown.

Now, let's look at health care. There's a big difference here. When I became President, Medicare was supposed to go broke last year—broke. We added, through reforms of Medicare, 27 years to the life of the Medicare program—27 years. And we passed a bill that said you could keep your health insurance if you changed jobs, if you got sick. And we did more for preventive care on breast cancer, prostate cancer, diabetes—big issue, diabetes. The Diabetes Federation said we've done more than anybody since the creation of insulin.

And we passed the Children's Health Insurance Program that's now provided health insurance to 2½ million kids. And last year, for the first time in 12 years, the number

of uninsured people in America dropped by more than 2 million. We are making progress.

So what's our health care plan, and what's the difference in where she is and where they are—Corrine? Well, we're for a real Patients' Bill of Rights, and they're not. We're for a Medicare drug program that all seniors can buy into on a voluntary basis.

Now, let me say, there's a lot of discussion about that, but I saw the other side's ad they're running down here, on the Vice President's drug program. Folks, it's a bunch of bull. I saw it. They say that our seniors are going to be forced into a Government-run HMO. They paint this big, dark picture about it. Have you seen the ad? It's unbelievable. The only good thing about it is, it's hard to follow, so maybe nobody will pay too much attention to it. [*Laughter*]

Let me tell you, that big, Government-run HMO—they're talking about the Medicare program. It's not Government medicine. Medicare goes to private doctors, private hospitals, private nursing homes. It's not a Government program. It's a financing program that has an administrative cost of under 2 percent, as compared with 10 to 14 percent for HMO's.

Now, this drug program of ours is totally voluntary. Do you know what the difference in our program and theirs is? We just let everybody who needs it buy in. And if you're poor, we pay your premium. If you have catastrophic illnesses and you have huge drug bills, we pay it. Otherwise, you've got to pay a monthly premium and a co-pay, but at least you get drug coverage if you need it.

Now, their program is—although, they phase it in over several years—their program is, if you've got 150 percent of the poverty line or less, they'll do more or less what we do, and if you're over that, you've got to buy an insurance policy. Now, the problem is, the health insurance companies say they can't write a policy that you can afford that will be worth having. The health insurance companies—I've got to give it to them, because I've been in a lot of fights with them. I take my hat off to them on this. They've been perfectly honest. They said, "This is crazy. You cannot write a health insurance policy for drugs that people can afford that will be

worth having." And half the people who need this help are over 150 percent of the poverty line. That's just about \$14,500, I think, for a couple. So it's not real.

Nevada adopted the Republican plan—whole cloth. You know how many health insurance companies have offered to provide drug insurance? Zero. Not one. You've got to give it to the Republicans, though. Evidence never phases them. Don't bother them with the facts. They just stick with their story. You've got to give it to them.

Now, this is a huge deal. If you live to be 65 today, your life expectancy is 82. With the human genome project, young women in this audience will soon be bringing babies home from the hospital that have a life expectancy of 90 years. But if you want people to live longer and live better, they've got to be able to get the medicine they need.

You've got to explain this to people. You know what's really going on? You couldn't tell it from the debates, and you sure can't tell it from looking at the ads. You know what's really going on? The big drug companies don't want this to pass. Now, that may not make any sense to you. I mean, why wouldn't the company making drugs want to sell more of their product? Most of you who are in business like to sell more of whatever it is you're selling.

Here's why. They do have a legitimate problem. And I'm glad they're in America; they do a great job. They develop all these lifesaving drugs, and they give tens of thousands of Americans good jobs, and I'm glad they're here. Here's their problem. They develop these drugs; they spend a lot of time and money developing the drug. Then they spend a lot of money advertising the drugs. And they can't recover either their cost of developing the drugs or the cost of advertising the drugs from their sales in Europe or Canada or anywhere else, because all those other countries have price control. So they make you pay 100 percent of the cost of developing and advertising the drugs. And once you do that, they can sell those drugs in Canada, in Europe, and anywhere else, and make a ton of money because they've already taken their overhead out of you.

Now, I'm still glad we've got those companies here, and I'm glad that we're getting

those good medicines. But what they're worried about is, if Medicare buys drugs for the seniors in America who join this program, they'll have so much market power that America's seniors might be able to get their medicine made in America almost as cheaply as Canadians can get medicine made in America.

That's what this whole deal is about. And every time you see one of those ads, you just remember that. This is all about why the drug companies don't want Medicare to provide lifesaving, life-lengthening, life-improving medicine to seniors, because they're afraid that they won't have anyplace they can recover the cost of developing and advertising the drug.

So they've got a real problem. But it is nothing compared to all these old folks choosing between food and medicine every week. So my answer to that is, let's take care of the American people, and then we'll figure out a way to take care of the drug companies' problem. We'll take care of their problem but not at the expense of the American people.

This is a huge difference. And she's right, and they're wrong. You've got to decide, but I think it's pretty clear. You've got to make this clear to people. We have the money to keep people alive. We have the money to keep people healthy in their later years. And we approve and applaud these pharmaceutical companies, but they shouldn't be trying to solve their problem at the expense of America's seniors. Take care of America's seniors. Then we'll find a way to take care of the drug companies' problem. That's what we've got to do.

Take education. You heard them both talking about education last night. I've been working at this for over 20 years, and I can tell you something I couldn't say 20 years ago, when I started working with then-Governor Bob Graham, and later, Governor Lawton Chiles. We now know something we didn't know when we started. We actually know how to turn around failing schools. We know that all our children can learn.

So you've got two candidates focused on accountability. I actually think our accountability measures are better than the ones that the Republican nominee proposed, but we

don't have time to go through that. Anyway, they're both genuinely for accountability. And they think the Federal dollars ought to follow performance. That's good.

Our focus is on failing schools: turn them around; shut them down; or put them under new management. But the difference is, our proposal is accountability-plus, and theirs is accountability-minus. That is, their proposal is accountability: block-grant the money; let people decide how to spend it, whether it works or not; and give people vouchers if it doesn't work. Our proposal is accountability: if people are in failings schools and they want out, let them go to a public charter school or have other public school choice; and help the schools succeed.

What is our record? When we started on our program to connect all the schools and classrooms to the Internet, 14 percent of the schools were connected; 3 percent of the classrooms were. Today, 94 percent of the schools are connected; 65 percent of the classrooms are. That's our proposal.

Our proposal is, with all these teachers retiring, let the National Government help the school districts pay for 100,000 more teachers to get classroom size down in the early grade. Our proposal is, with the largest and most diverse school population we've ever had, help the schools build or drastically realter 6,000 schools and repair another 5,000 a year for the next 5 years, so the kids will have decent places to go to school; double the number of kids in after-school programs and summer school programs and let every kid who needs to be in a preschool program be in one. We've got the money. We ought to do it. Help the schools succeed. Accountability plus support. Big difference. Huge difference. She's right, and they're not.

Now, on health care—let me just say this again—we can do the following thing: We can provide the Medicare prescription drug benefit; we can provide a long-term care tax credit for people who are taking care of their elderly or disabled relatives at home of \$3,000 a year; we can take the parents, the working parents of the children that are now eligible for the Children's Health Insurance Program and put them in the program—that will take care of 25 percent of the people in America without health insurance—we

can provide—in our budget we've got \$220 million to help low-income women deal with breast and cervical cancer and get treatment they otherwise could not get; and we fully fund the Ricky Ray Fund in honor of the young man from Florida who died shortly after I was elected—a young man who I had the pleasure to meet, and he and his family—I'll never forget them. That fund now provides care for people who got infected with HIV through blood transfusions.

We can do all of that if we want to do it. That's in our budget. These are choices you have to make. There are choices on the environment. Do you like what we did on the Everglades? Don't you think we ought to keep cleaning up the environment and growing the economy? Big choices. We favor doing both. They say you've got to relax the air pollution rules. They say maybe we ought not to have these 43 million acres I set aside in the national forests. They say maybe we ought to take another look at the national monuments I protected for all time to come.

We don't have to do that. We proved you can grow the economy and improve the environment. We've got cleaner air, cleaner water, more land saved than any administration since Theodore Roosevelt. We proved that. We cleaned up 3 times as many toxic waste dumps as they did in a dozen years in our 8. But again, the evidence doesn't get in the way of them. They're sticking with their story. Never mind the evidence. You've got a clear choice here.

Same thing on crime. Crime's come down 7 years in a row, the lowest crime we've had in 27 years now. And we've done more to put 100,000, now 150,000, police on the street and to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. And there hasn't been a single hunter in north Florida miss a day in the woods in a hunting season yet—not a day, not a minute, in spite of all the stuff they said.

So what's their proposal? "We've got no business putting these police on the street," and they want to reverse it. I mean, we got the lowest crime rate in 27 years, and part of it's because we put these police on the street. They want to reverse it. You've got a clear choice here. She's right, and they're

not. And you've got to think about it. So I ask you to think about these things.

If I could be given one wish for America, as I look out on this vast and diverse crowd, believe it or not, it would not even be for a continuation, unbroken, of our economic prosperity. I would wish, if I only had one wish, that we keep making progress and learning to live together across the racial and religious and other lines that divide us, because this is one thing I think we all agree on, without regard to party. The most important thing about America is not its Government, it's its people. And if we're getting along together, we're plenty smart enough to figure out how to solve any problem that comes along. If we're getting along together and we celebrate our own heritage but we believe that what God has given us in our common humanity is more important than what's different about us, even though we're proud about what's different about us, then everything else is going to work out.

Now, I think the Government does have a role in that. We're for strong hate crimes legislation. Their leadership is against it, including their nominee. We're for strengthening the law that requires equal pay for equal work for women, and they're not for that. We're for that, and they're not for that. So that's one where Corrine and Alcee are right, and their leadership is wrong.

So I want you to go out from this place and say, yes, we had a good rally, and we cheered for Corrine. But you better think about it. If you like what's happening to the economy and you want it to go on, you better keep paying this debt down and invest in America's people and not reverse our economic policy. You better keep investing in education and not only have high standards for our kids but put the investments there that will enable the children to meet those standards, and support the teachers in teaching those kids.

And we want a health care system that doesn't mess up our drug companies and doesn't bankrupt our HMO's. But we can have a Patients' Bill of Rights and a Medicare drug benefit and a long-term care tax credit and do these other things for our health care system and still take care of the people that

are giving us the medicine and the health care.

And we want America to keep going until we're the safest big country in the world. And we want to keep cleaning up the environment, while we improve the economy. And most important of all, we want to build one America. And on every single one of these issues, there are huge differences. Look, folks, I've done everything I could to turn this country around, to get us together, and move us forward.

But when the Vice President says, when the Vice President says in these debates, "You ain't seen nothing yet," that's not just an election year slogan. I'm not going to be there, and I believe that. I believe that, because it takes a long time to turn a country around. It's like a big ocean liner in the ocean—that's why the *Titanic* hit the iceberg. They saw the iceberg, but they didn't see it in time to turn it around. Now, we got it turned around before we hit the iceberg, but we still haven't reached the far shore of our destination.

So the best is still out there. But now it's all back in your hands. We've got to make the right choices. There is a clear choice. It just has to be clear to every single American.

I will never be able to thank you enough for what you have done for me. But the most important thing is what you will do for yourselves, your children, and your grandchildren by getting out, voting for her, voting for Bill Nelson, voting for Al Gore and Joe Lieberman on November 7th.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in the Exhibit Hall at the Prime Osborne Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to State Senator Betty S. Holzendorf; Bill Nelson, candidate for U.S. Senate from Florida; and Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush. Representative Brown is a candidate for reelection in Florida's Third Congressional District.

Remarks to the Uncommon Women on Common Ground Conference in Jacksonville

October 4, 2000

[*The President's remarks are joined in progress.*]

The President. —and when the actors were supposed to get their curtain call, they pulled back the curtains and all the real people were standing there. It was an amazing thing. But Kerry, you know her husband, Andrew, is in my Cabinet, of course. And her mother is a great friend of mine, and one of her brothers served in Congress with me during my Presidency. But she has done an astonishing thing here, and I urge you to look at the book and read it. It's really amazing. There are a lot of brave women out there around the world, doing things that stiffen the spine when you read about it.

Let me just say a few words about a couple of women's issues that I think are quite important. And I hadn't really prepared anything to say, but we're close to an election in which I believe the American people will make choices which, whether we consciously are aware of it or not, will shape a lot of how we live for the next 20 years. And one of the biggest challenges we face, I think, is how to broaden the circle of prosperity to include people that aren't part of it and then how to figure out how both to continue to open opportunities for women and allow people to balance work and family, because the most important work of society is still raising children, and so we have to figure out how to balance these things.

And the truth is that our country is better at creating jobs, starting businesses, and expanding the economy than nearly any country in the world. In the last several years, we've been, by far, better than anybody else in the world, but if you look over a long period of time, we do pretty well with that. But we lag significantly behind a lot of other countries in figuring out how to balance work and family.